

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01449 311135Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7290
INFO AMEMBMASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
ZEN AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1449

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, US, PEPR, XF
SUBJECT: SOVIETS ASSERT MOSCOW'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

REF: MOSCOW 1141

1. A LONG ARTICLE IN PRAVDA OF JAN. 28 BY M. TUMANOV
REVIEWS THE MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION UNDER THE HEADING
OF "A GAME WITHOUT PERSPECTIVE." THE ARTICLE MOVES FROM
ONE THEME TO ANOTHER, TOUCHING ALONG THE WAY ISRAELI
INTRANSIGENCE, U.S. AND EGYPTIAN "DIPLOMATIC AMBIGUITY"
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01449 311135Z

ON THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND THE FAILURE
OF U.S. PRESSURE ON OTHER ARAB STATES TO FOLLOW SADAT'S
LEAD. MOST STRIKING TO US WERE TUMANOV'S REMARKS
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ARTICLE DIRECTED AGAINST
THOSE WHO, HE SAYS, ARE ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE
SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. TUMANOV
BLAMES "IMPERIALISM," ISRAEL, AND "SEVERAL ARAB

REGIMES" FOR THIS AND STATES THAT "THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE WORLD IS DETERMINED BY ITS VERY EXISTENCE AND POWER." TUMANOV STATES FURTHER THAT THE ARABS THEMSELVES UNDERSTAND THAT "IT WOULD BE A HISTORICAL MISTAKE NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE ENORMOUS ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THEIR OWN FATE."

2. ON THE QUESTION OF THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, POLITICAL COUNSELOR MET ON JAN. 27 WITH OLEG A. GRINEVSKY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE NEAR EASTERN COUNTRIES DEPARTMENT OF MFA IN A GENERALLY UNPRODUCTIVE EXCHANGE. GRINEVSKY REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT ON PONOMAREV'S STATEMENT (PRAVDA, JAN. 24) THAT THE U.S. HAD UNILATERALLY REPUDIATED THE OCT. 1 JOINT STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST (REFTEL), CLAIMING THAT HE WAS UNAWARE THA PONO-MAREV HAD MADE SUCH A STATEMENT. IN A CONVERSATION THAT SAME EVENING WITH POL COUNS, FEDOSEYEV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE MFA'S USA DIVISION, ALSO DEMURRED ON THIS SAME POINT, CLAIMING IGNORANCE OF PONOMAREV'S COMMENTS.

3. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT THE SOVIET PRESS HAS NOT REPEATED PONOMAREV'S STATEMENT, AND TUMANOV MERELY STATES THAT "THE SITUATION HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01449 311135Z

COMPLICATED" AS A RESULT OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES.
MATLOCK

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